

The McGill Daily

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Black Heritage Supplement



Africa is the mother of civilization. Since the beginning of time, Africans have made significant contributions to history. Most educational and political institutions refuse to acknowledge these contributions.

Thousands of years ago, Africans built the pyramids and shared their education with others around the world. Just three decades ago, Black North Americans mobilized this continent against racial oppression and inspired a movement for civil rights. Recently, the city of New York elected its first Black mayor; the state of Virginia, its first Black governor.

Despite these great advances, there remain negative stereotypes and the degradation of Blacks continues around the world.

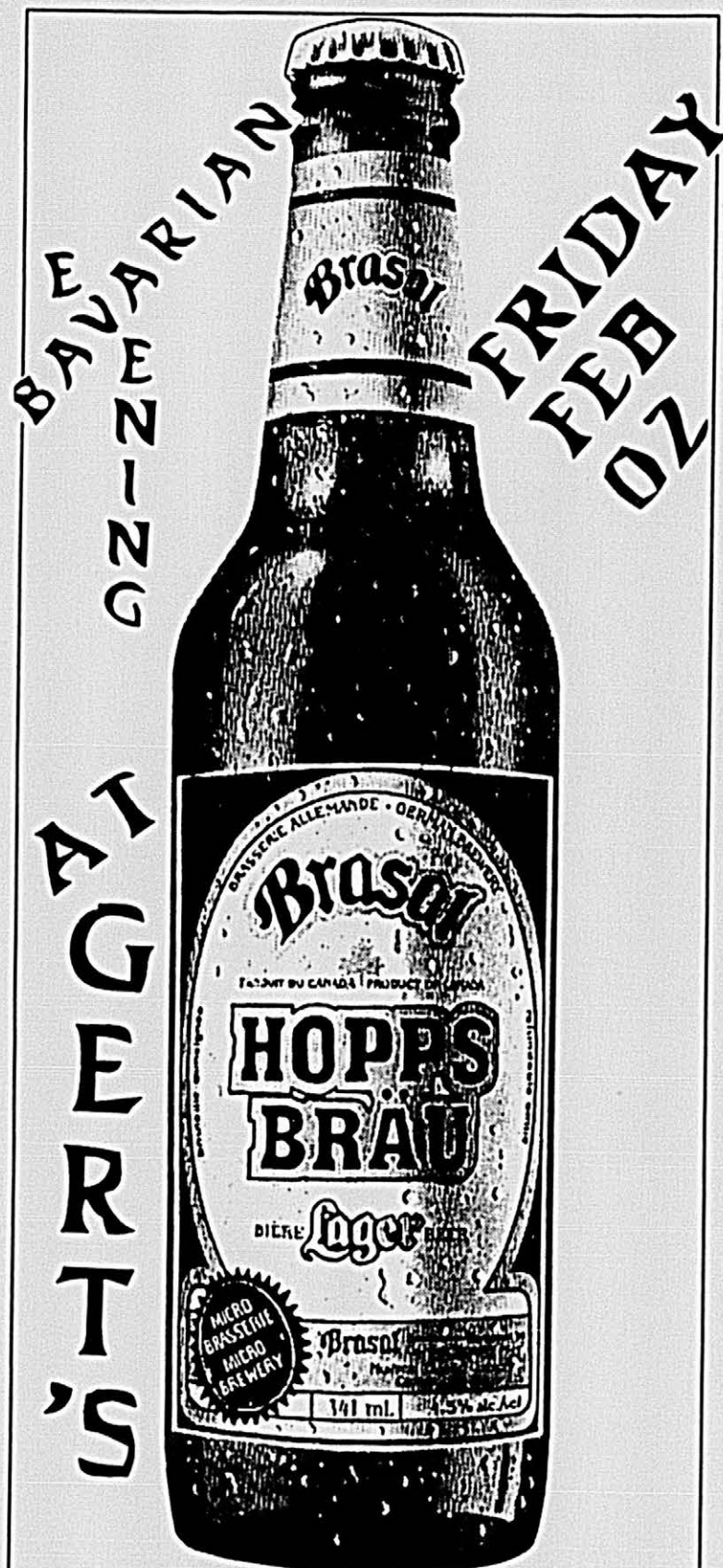
Black History Month is intended to eradicate these stereotypes and prejudices against Blacks. This special time serves as an important tool for the development of race consciousness and

great pride of the Black race.

For twenty-eight days in February the Black community seeks to inform everyone of the crucial role of Blacks in history. February serves as a reminder of what the great Black race has already achieved, and as an incentive for future growth. The Black Students' Network of McGill University promotes the celebration of Black History Month at McGill and in Montréal communities. We have organized several events throughout February to celebrate our rich heritage and to educate everyone on the roles Blacks have played in history.

In the spirit of Marcus, Martin, Malcolm and Marley, we invite everyone to partake in these events.

Audrea Golding
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Reparation Movement seeks political justice

by Anne-Marie Clarke

At no time in world history were a people kidnapped, imprisoned and brutalized as Africans were under slavery. Its legacy of poverty and powerlessness, that has kept Africans at the bottom of the national economy, remains. No other people have such a large claim against the government. If governments are truly to be held accountable for what they do, reparations must be made for all those who have suffered at the hands of a racist society.

The International Tribunal on Reparations for Black People in the United States found in 1982 that the economic losses to Africans in America, for unpaid labour during slavery, is \$4.1 trillion — interest and inflation to be added at the time of settlement. To pay this debt would be impossible in one lump sum, so the creditors can be paid in an infinite variety of ways, over a long period of time.

The major goals of the Black reparations movement are political and economic self-determination, and thus the Black Reparations Commission has developed a nine year Economic Development for Self-Reliance program that would involve the development of institutions through Black reparations.

Various groups of Africans have recommended different ways to pay this debt. The government could grant tuition credits to African-American students, give tax exemptions for all African-Americans, dis-

tribute land, designate five exclusive states in the Black Belt South, finance a return to Africa, or manufacture and produce institutions.

The Black Reparations Commission is now calling for payment with interest. During Reconstruction (the period after the Civil War during which the equality of Blacks was supposedly manifested), reparations to freed slaves were proposed as campaign promises. A bill providing for this passed through both houses of Congress, only to be vetoed by President Andrew Jackson. Groups are still fighting for what rightfully belongs to their people.

Reparations for the African holocaust

During slavery over 250 million people were murdered. Africans were also tortured, raped and kidnapped. Our names, our religion, our language and our land was stolen from us and our labour was taken for free. For centuries, Africans were subjected to the brutalities of a country that on Sunday preaches fraternity and sorority but does not practice it. As a result, families were torn apart and our cultural heritage torn to shreds by this racist society.

Slaves worked full days on the plantations, never being able to reap the fruits of their hard labour. The effects of these centuries of unpaid labour are still evident today. Because of this social and economic discrimination, many Africans remain handicapped, for it is quite dif-

ficult to pull yourself up by the bootstraps when you do not have boots.

While many will agree that slavery was an atrocity, they do not believe that reparations are deserved. Reparations are defined as money, materials or something done to make amends for a wrong or injury. Does slavery not qualify as a wrong or injury? Is it not far worse or at least as atrocious as the Japanese-Americans who were wrongfully interned in U.S. concentration camps during World War II?

Reparations usually cover war-related damages. The rape and pillage of Africans and Africa was a war in every sense. It may not have been recorded as a war, but this is to be expected, for the same people who instigated the war are the ones recording history.

Africa's most valuable resource, Africans, were stolen for

the slave trade, in addition to other valuables. Before the rape of Africa, it was a civilization much more advanced than Europe. The basis of mathematics began from an African. Philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle realized the wealth of knowledge and advancement in Africa and so pursued their educations there.

The heavy colonization of Africa created the inability to achieve what we had when we were controlling our own destiny. This is a direct result of the European and American war waged upon Africans.

In 1987 the United States government paid \$20 000 each to Japanese-American concentration camp victims. Along with the cheque, a formal apology was given for the "grave injustice" caused by "racial prejudice" against Americans of Japanese descent.

What about racial prejudice against the 26 million Americans of African descent (not forgetting those brought to the Caribbean) who are still suffering and feeling the psychological effects of slavery? A people who, after 400 years, are no longer physically enslaved in

North America, yet are still being subtly indoctrinated with a helpless and worthless mindset at every turn.

An apology was made to the Japanese-Americans and payment was made to those wrongfully interned. For Africans, an apology would not suffice. Few people would be content with an apology if their boss did not pay them for a day's work, much less for centuries of work without pay.

It has also been said that the slaves who worked the plantations are the only ones entitled. Since they are no longer alive, goes the argument, the debt can never be paid.

Common sense and even the slightest knowledge of the law shows this reasoning to be false. Under laws of inheritance, that owned or rightfully belonging to one's foreparents is the property of the succeeding generations.

Reparation is the only possible way of dealing with the aftermath of slavery. Debts unpaid over years, by law, accumulate interest — and African-Americans are demanding payment now.



Black feminists fight sexist customs

by Michael Watson

Among Black African women there is a growing awareness of traditional customs which are undesirable if not cruel. These customs have religious and cultural roots which make their struggle against patriarchy different from other women's.

Female Circumcision

Two targets of the African feminists are the ritual practices of excision and infibulation (sewing up the vagina). Excision, or clitoridectomy, is a process by which the clitoris or "male" portion of a young girl's genitalia is removed supposedly to insure her cleanliness and chastity.

In *La Cité magique et magie en Afrique noire* Jacques Lantier describes excision. First, the

labia majora and labia minora are separated and "secured" by thorns imbedded in the flesh of the inner thighs. Next, the head of the clitoris is slit before it is completely removed. The labia minora is then cut away. The outer lips are sewed together, and can only be reopened on the woman's wedding night.

Some of the numerous complications resulting from infibulation include dysmenorrhoea (painful or difficult menstruation) and dysuria (painful or difficult urination). Many women have died from severe bleeding or infections.

Many African women question both the continued existence and purpose of this custom.

According to the Women's International Network (WIN) at least twenty-six African countries practice female circumcision.

In the Year of the Woman (1975) the Association Terre des Hommes unsuccessfully petitioned the World Health Organization (WHO) to expose the harmful effects of these practices. The WHO replied its responsibilities did not include the study of ritual operations which are "the result of social and cultural concepts."

Although both African and European gynecologists have spoken out against this custom, change has been slow. Making infibulation illegal has little effect in weakening traditional attitudes. Many African women perceive their situation as the "normal condition of women." In a significant number of African societies, rebellion against tradition and is a step towards being ostracized by one's community. Women who are not infibulated are considered unclean, and therefore unfit for

marriage.

Polygamy

African women are also fighting polygamy. This practice still exists in, among other countries, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana. Having multiple wives is a symbol of wealth or prestige for some men, and Muslims believe it is a right sanctioned by the Koran.

Opponents of polygamy reject this claim. African feminist Awa Thiam said in a survey, 80 per cent of men said sex was the primary consideration in their desire for several wives. She added the dowry has lost its meaning as the union of the two individuals, and marriage has become commercialized.

Dowries now involve not only large amounts of cash but also gifts such as televisions or cars. If the bridegroom or his

parents are unable to cover the cost of the wedding, then it is not unusual for the family to be rendered virtually penniless.

Miriam Vieyra, one of the many women speaking out, says in her novel *Juletane* polygamy must be critically examined in the context of modern

An African Struggle

Although fighting patriarchy is a global battle, African women recognize their struggle as distinct from European women's struggle because Black women must fight neo-colonial attitudes. African women reject intervention from well-meaning but misinformed Western feminists who do not understand the complexities of African societies. The participation of Western feminists is welcome, say many Africans, but not their misunderstanding.

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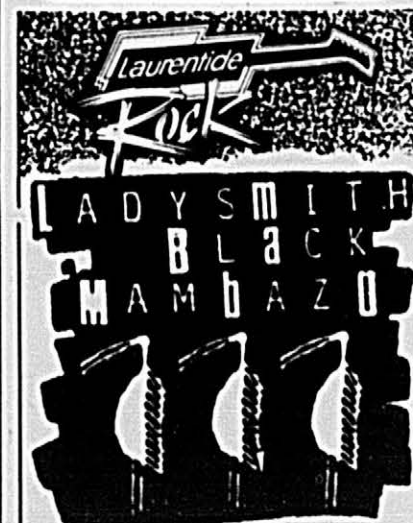
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The forgotten Black heritage

by Johanne Jean-Baptiste

Our Eurocentric education has ignored the incredible contributions Blacks have made to the human history. Most students do not even know that the human race originated in the heart of Africa.

In order to survive and succeed humans had to control fire, invent basic tools (spears) and create effective social organizations. For thousands of years civilizations flourished all over Africa. Those that have most influenced European history and development are the empires of Ancient Egypt and Medieval Mali. European scholars trace their intellectual history to the ancient Greeks who continually paid tribute to the Egypt they called *kemi*: the black land. Traces of Egyptian beliefs can be found in Judeo-Christian thought: the founding couple (Osiris and Isis), monotheism (Ra the sun-god), the concept of soul (ka), and the fear of a hell.

Ancient Egypt

The original Egyptians migrated up the Nile from what is now Ethiopia and the Sudan towards Egypt. During the time of the Old Kingdom, the ground work of what became the greatest civilization in the world was

laid out. The most impressive legacy is the architecture. The Egyptians' thorough knowledge of mathematics, chemistry and geometry enabled them to create the pyramids and other superlative works of art. They discovered pi, sin cos, tan, cot, algebraic series, the infinite screw and balances. Hieroglyphs are the oldest form of writing ever found.

Egyptians studied the stars and based their calendar on earth's motion around the sun. Each day was composed of 24 hours and each year of 365 days; a rectification was made every 1460th year. A clinical treatise was written by Imhotep around 3000 B.C. According to the Greek savant Herodotus the Egyptians were well versed in issues of hygiene, reparation of fractures or broken skin and pharmacy.

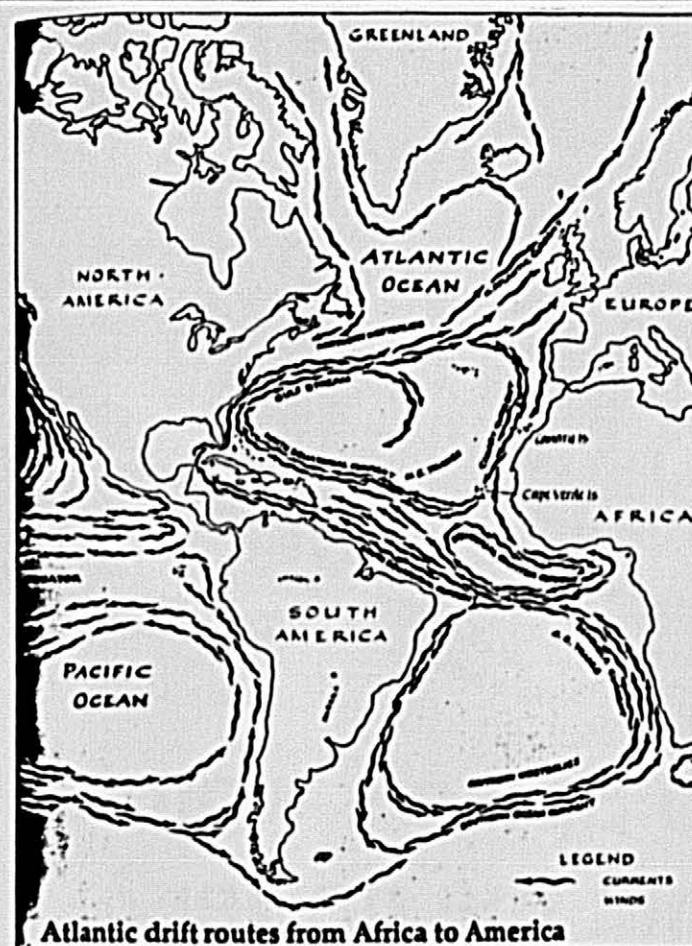
Egyptians never militarised to a significant level. As early as the sixth dynasty, Asians invaded Egypt. Some of the Egyptians returned south and built smaller kingdoms but the majority that remained eventually mixed with the invaders who adapted to the rich cultural heritage instead of destroying it. The prolific Middle Kingdom was ended by the invasion of the Hyksos (from the Persian area) who destroyed many

temples and even reduced the Egyptians to slavery. Power was soon regained by the Egyptians and the eighteenth to the twentieth dynasties flourished under such kings as Tutankhamen and Ramses II.

Egypt was invaded by the Assyrians, Persians and Greeks who like the Asians were compelled to the indomitable Egyptian culture. The last invaders were the ruthless Romans who along with Alexander the Great raped, ransacked ancient Egypt destroying it forever.

Europeans returned to the cradle of civilization in the eighteenth century at the height of their expansion when they were elaborating their supremacist racist ideologies. Ancient Egypt scholars therefore vehemently denied that the Egyptians were part of the Black race. After many mind-stretching rationalizations, it was declared that the Egyptians were a Caucasian race with black skin, curly hair, flat nose and thick lips. To be classified as Black, one must have in addition to those features thin hips and skinny calves.

Since Egypt was many times invaded, a people with a mixture of phenotypes resulted. Only the mummies with straight hair, sculptures with a broken



Atlantic drift routes from Africa to America

flat nose and paintings of lignified colored people were shown in textbooks and museums.

Most students can recognize Cleopatra or Ramses II but few can identify the great queen Hatshepsut or the pharaoh Cephren for whom the greatest pyramid. These works have long been overlooked mostly because of the negro features of their subjects.

West Africa: Mali

Near the end of the fifteenth century, a young naviga-

tor, Columbus begged the Portuguese royalties to finance a trip to the Americas using a route known by the Africans.

Going down the west African coast, any boat can be dragged off by the currents to the Americas. The people of ancient Egypt and medieval Mali apparently visited America travelling on papyrus or wooden boats. An Egyptian manuscript was found in 1513 which featured an accurate drawing of the west African and

continued on page 8

Irie! Freedom! Rastafari!

by Chantal Thomas

A look beneath the Afro-psychedelic image of Rastafarianism reveals a unique and powerfully significant black movement contrary to the common images of dreadlocks, reggae, and marijuana that the title provokes.

Ethiopianism, Garvey, and Rastafari

Under Black nationalist Marcus Garvey's influence, the tradition of Ethiopianism formed a base for the Rastafarian movement. Ethiopianism was the reaction of African-Jamaicans against Europeanized Christianity, which had only served to propagate slavery and oppression on the island. In contrast, Black Christianity, through worshipping a Black Christ and emphasizing the role of ancient Ethiopian civilization in Biblical texts, offered a history to a people whose history had been denied them.

Garvey brought Ethiopianist ideology into sharp focus with his Back to Africa movement, and cultivated a large and energetic following in Jamaica. On the eve of his departure for the United States in 1916, he allegedly said to a farewell

crowd, "Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King, he shall be the Redeemer."

For the next fourteen years, the Ethiopian/Garveyite movement fell somewhat into disarray until 1930, Ras Tafari, great grandson of King Saheka Selassie of Shoa, was crowned Negus of Ethiopia. He took the name Haile Salassie (might of the Trinity). To the followers of Garvey in Jamaica, the crowning of this young Ethiopian king was a revelation from God and a fulfillment of prophecy: Haile Salassie was the Messiah of African Redemption.

Led by Leonard Howell among others, the Rastafarian movement was formed, and claimed Selassie as its God-figure. The millenarian doctrine of Rastafarianism helped soothe Jamaica's political, economic, and social problems, which had been worsened by the great depression.

The Pinnacle Commune and Its Descent

The new Rastafarian movement was quickly forced underground when, after openly advocating their extremist platform, the movement's leaders were imprisoned on charges of sedition. Howell escaped and

took the Rastafarians to the hills where they formed the Pinnacle commune—a hidden dwelling containing between five and sixteen hundred people. The commune existed with few major upsets until 1954 when it was raided by police, and its members fled to Jamaica's capital, Kingston.

This period, extending to 1960, bred intense hatred between the Rastas and the establishment, dubbed "Babylon," and Rastas called for immediate repatriation to Africa.

Clashes between Rastas and Babylon became so extreme that the University of the West Indies did a sociological study of the Rastafarian movement in 1960. The resulting report called for immediate social action, thus playing a major role in the eventual legitimization of the Rastafarian movement.

The Rastafarians since 1975

The last fifteen years have brought many important changes to the Rastafarian, the most salient of them being the dethronement and death of the God-king Selassie in the years 1974-5. Instead of weakening the movement, those events seemed to have caused Rastafarians to believe ever more fervently.

Since the Rastafarians do not recognize death, they are not hindered from believing that the African Messiah will come again.

The spread of Rastafarianism through reggae, and the emergence of the more moderate Twelve Tribes of Israel movement, have also been important developments.

Rastafarians have also been gaining ground in both social and political arenas. They have gradually improved the slum areas in which they lived, and have garnered new members among the upper classes.

As well, the Rastafarians have considerably increased their political leverage; their support was instrumental in the elections of Jamaican Prime Ministers Michael Manley and Edward Seaga.

Beliefs, Rituals, and Lifestyle

Rastas believe the Black Person is the reincarnation of the Ancient Israel; that the Africans are a holy people who have suffered for their sins at the hands of Whites through slavery and exile from Ethiopia, but who have long since been redeemed by God. Jamaica is the land of their exile and their hell;

Ethiopia is the land of redemption and glory.

The Rastafarian doctrine also echoes the Garveyite idea of Black supremacy. However, the Rastafarians are not anti-white. They see Whites as the oppressing race, for obvious historical reasons, but accept individual Whites as innocent until proven guilty of racism. Whites may find more acceptance among Rastafarians than some Blacks, and many Whites have joined the Rastafarian movement.

The Rastafarian's lifestyle is oriented towards nature and their religion, emphasizing communal sharing, a basically vegetarian diet, and the avoidance of anything processed or artificial (including alcohol). Rastafarians smoke ganja to "calm and clear" their minds and allow proper meditation.

A Diasporic Force

To denounce Rastafarianism as extremist is superficial. If Rastafarians stubbornly cling to their African heritage and fiercely cry for freedom and repatriation, it must ultimately be because the movement emerged from a society whose disenfranchisement and alienation was itself extreme, and whose origin lay in slavery and exile.

Scene from Spike Lee's *School Days*

Do Spike's women fight the power?

By Andrea Worrell

Spike Lee has championed the cause of freedom from racism with great success. His movies have brought forth issues that plague the minds of African people, and depicted a modern Black culture many of us can identify with. However, on a less revolutionary note, Lee has managed to portray the women in his films with a sexist bias.

She's Gotta Have What?

In his first major release, *She's Gotta Have It*, we are presented with the familiar image of a strong Black woman. Nola Darling appears to be an independent woman who control of all aspects of her life, especially the men. Dating three people simultaneously, and attracted to something different in each, she seems to be an unrepressed, liberal sexual being. The fact is Nola is confused; about her role in the world, about her feelings and about her sexuality. Her confusion only increases when the men pressure her to choose among them.

Despite the her Nola's initial independence, she emerges foremost as a commodity, a prize to be won by one of her three suitors. This notion is best illustrated by the scene in which Nola invites her boyfriends, Mars, Jamie and Greer, to Thanksgiving dinner with the futile hope that each will understand the interest she has in the others. The predictable result is an evening of childish rivalry, jealous squabbles and ignoring Nola in favour of proving their masculinity.

Later in the film, Nola is raped by Jamie, her "boy-next-door" lover. The violation is rationalized as a frustrated and desperate attempt on Jamie's part to "give it to her the way she wants it." What Lee fails to show is that during Jamie's attack the furthest thing from his mind was pleasing Nola. He was solely concerned with breaking down her resistance through humiliation and forcing her to submit to him. Nola also seemed to be unaware of this. After the rape, she decides Jamie is the man for her. This decision is shortly followed by the realization that she is not a "one man

kind of woman." Celibacy is her temporary solution.

Spike Lee shows undeniable bravery as a Black man creating a film about Black female sexuality. He admirably attempts to buy into the old myth about African women (we want it hard, we want it now), then explode it in typical Spike Lee style. But his scheme fails. If at the beginning of the film the audience sees Nola as a liberal, sexually expressive being, at the end she seems no more than a mixed-up "slut."

Dazed on the Sidelines

Lee's second feature, *School Daze*, splits Nola's complex character into two simple, hollow caricatures, Rachel and Jane. Both are romantically involved with the two main male characters; Dap, a politically conscious brother, and Julian "Big Brother Almighty", who swears his roots are grounded in Detroit, Michigan, and that only monkeys come from Mother Africa.

Unlike the men who oppose each other on political and intellectual levels, the battle between the women revolves around aesthetics. The big showdown pitting the "Wannabes" against the "Jigaboos" culminates in a musical revue which lyrically examines the pros and cons of chemically treated hair, fair skin and coloured contact lenses.

Again, Lee demonstrates the objectification of women while making them accomplices in the act. Like Nola's forced submission to Jamie, Jane is proved to be Julian's "thang" when he nonchalantly "gives" her to a virgin member of his frat. Jane reluctantly concedes to the act, believing obedience will prove her love for her man.

Rachel reflects the stronger side of African femininity. At times she is a no-nonsense woman who refuses to take Dap's bullshit. But at times she commits the crime that Lee's female characters seem so prone to: she trades her strength for devotion. She is Dap's support and has trouble defying him. In *School Daze* the actions are left to the men, while the women look pretty, cheer from the sidelines,

and occasionally wipe the brows of their tired men. It is the classic situation where "men act and women appear."

Lee did the Wrong Thing

Black women have historically been marginalized if not completely ignored by the mainstream film industry. It is a shame that a producer/director/writer as enlightened and innovative as Spike Lee has fallen prey to this Hollywood tendency. This reductionist tradition is continued in Lee's most recent work *Do The Right Thing*. The film succeeds in terms of depicting racial oppression and what often happens when the oppressed group stands up for itself. Yet once again Lee fails to create full, credible female characters who exist outside of their relationships to men. This is most evident in the characters of Jade and Tina. Although these women are important people in protagonist Mookie's life, there is virtually no indication the women have lives of their own. This is particularly disturbing in Jade's (Mookie's sister) case. She is portrayed as refined, intelligent, and mature, but repeatedly tells Mookie to "own up to his respon-

sibilities," while ironically shown to have none of her own. There is no mention of her job, her friends, her problems, nothing. Are we to believe that she has no life?

Mother-Sister, the neighbourhood "matriarch," is another example of Lee's limited portrayals of women. After seeing the film several times her character remains a mystery. Perhaps her presence was simply to be a romantic interest for Da Mayor, who, incidentally, was able to disclose his entire life story.

Most of Lee's female characters "needed" to be protected. During the film's riot scene, Mother-Sister is overwhelmed by the event and starts screaming in the middle of the street. To her rescue comes Da Mayor, the local shiftless, well-intentioned drunk. He wraps his arms around her, shielding her from the surrounding danger, and winks her to the safety of her apartment, where he spends the night...comforting her.

This theme of protection creeps up again when Mookie feels he must shield his sister from the kindness of his employer Sal. Whether Sal's friendliness toward Jade was sexual

The
by Stefan Verna

To fully understand the Afro-American must first explore the through which they to overcome their

Unlike other blacks have achieved recognition, film-m its stringent economic denied the opportunity more accessible arts have been deprived that could expose wider audience.

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In the United States descendants are k slavery, the "order

Lyonel Laurenceau, *La Famille*.

La joie de vivre dans les peintures Haïtiens

by Roodly Archer

Un peu partout dans le monde, en France, en Yougoslavie, en Grèce, en Haïti, quelques peintres naïfs (auto-didactes) travaillent pour nous offrir des œuvres où l'horreur, le mal et la misère ne sont guère représentés.

Ces tableaux illustrent la recherche d'un paradis perdu, l'embellissement du réel, le rejet du monde artificiel dans lequel nous évoluons. En Haïti, les mains de l'histoire ont toujours été maculées de sang.

Néanmoins, les artistes haïtiens continuent de peindre, avec beau-

coup de couleur, la plutôt la volonté de à ce peuple opprimé core.

Ces quelques ph ent qu'un echan créateur de ces genre

e roots of Black cinema

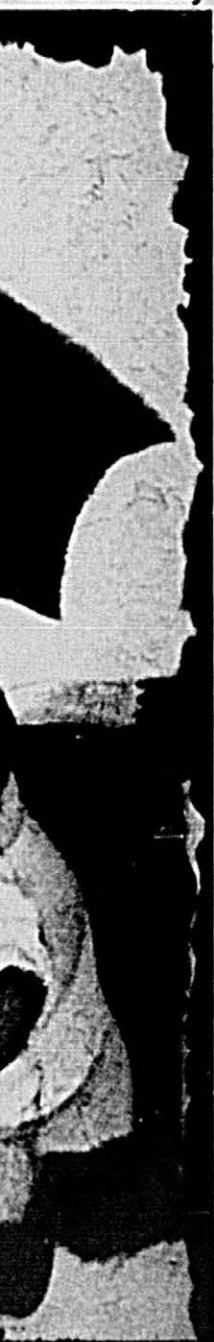
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perpetuate the existing power structure, but more importantly to quiet and muffle the loud voice of activism.

The visual qualities of Film & Television are crucial in the establishment of representational stereotypes. In this case, showing whites being dominated by blacks, thus leaving millions of film-viewers to surrender their own identities, dreams and aspirations to the very narrow scope of a mainstream ideology.

The Hollywood establishment which has been funded for years by big multinational corporations to become a force in enforcing these images on screens. Not surprisingly, very early in the development of the film medium, White & Black audiences were being inundated by portrayals of the Negro slave as a creature void of any culture or heritage.

The wide release of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) created such an uproar among black leaders, that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) launched a formal protest movement against the picture, setting up picket and boycott lines outside theatres presenting the film.

Throughout most of the pre-war era, civil rights organizations used a variety of voices and actions to warn Hollywood producers of their indignation with the manner in which their cultural experiences were being depicted on screen. This led to the mass boycott of all Big Studio films by blacks in an attempt to put economic pressure on the Hollywood empire. On a different front, black actors and actresses were urged not to accept stereotypical roles that were being offered to them.

The effect of all these conflicts was unprecedented in creating a number of independent film companies whose mandate was to produce films dealing the dynamics and disorientation within the black community. 150 of these corporations saw life, important to their survival was a network of over 600 independent theatres across the country. Ironically, many of the film companies were financed by White entrepreneurs (only 34 per cent were owned and operated by Black business). The first of these ventures was the California based Lincoln Motion Picture Co. By 1916 it had successfully produced a feature film; *Realization of a Negro Ambition*. It was an historical event insofar as the "all colored" cast did not feature any dramatic stereotypical roles.

The years 1910 to 1950 saw the emergence of the "race movie", a special film genre which because of its black social context and its link to black folklore represented the dilemmas and aspirations of Afro-Americans.

But the man whom many considered to be a pioneer of black filmmaking, the legendary Oscar Micheaux was dedicated in creating his own concept of black cinema. His films were a mixture of subliminal social messages and sheer entertainment.

What distinguished him from the other of the time was not only his

background (he was a farmer and novelist), but his treatment of the black experience from an idyllic perspective: a world where blacks were as affluent and educated as their white counterparts. Most of his stories dealt with the trials of the black bourgeoisie. Micheaux was often criticized for choosing leading performers who were close to a white ideal: straight hair, keen features and light complexions.

His most famous films, *Birthright* (1924), *Daughter of the Congo* (1930), *God's Step Children* (1938) and *Underworld* (1937) were all similar in form and story to Hollywood, except for their black slant. He was able, through his shrewd promotional sense and dedication to produce, direct and write some 30 feature films between 1918 and 1948.

By all accounts the truest most honest account of Black culture on the screen was put together by combining the technical effort of two white journeymen; Frank Perugini and Al Liguori, and the talents of an talented colored cast. *The Scar of Shame* (1927), to this day stands as an artistic accomplishment for its accurate black social mores and plausible contrasting symbols of power and poverty.

The great depression, the appearance of talkies combined with the release of big studio Black musicals, such as *Heart of Dixie* (1929) and *Hallelujah* (1929) sparked the decline of Black independent film industry.

Not until the pre-war years, did a resurgence of these films occur. Led primarily by individual producers such as Ralph Cooper and George Randolph, but more importantly the second era of this genre of film saw the emergence of Black film stars: Paul Robeson and Lena Horne. Following them, a number of Black artists, mostly jazz musicians made the leap into movies; to name the two most prominent figures, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.

The few titles from that era are *The Emperor Jones* (1933), *The Spirit of Youth* (1938) depicting the rise of boxing star Joe Lewis and the musical *The Blood of Jesus* (1941). What is crucial about these films was not only their more sophisticated narratives, but they also displayed the biggest technical advancement in the history of Race Movies.

By the late forties, Black films had lost considerable ground to Hollywood's "Problem Pictures" which dealt with the new view of the Negro and their role in American society; *Home of the Brave* (1949), *Lost Boundaries* (1949) each examined the Black Man's plight for self-definition.

The fifties witnessed the rise of Sidney Poitier as an American and international movie star. His career spanned almost the entire post-war era. Poitier's roles in *No Way Out* (1950), *Edge of the City* (1957) and *The Defiant Ones* (1958) were the first films proposing racial intergration and assimilation.

As a result of constant pressures from the NAACP and federal agencies, the sixties saw the beginning of Blacks entering Hollywood in multitudes of functions: Harry Belafonte in

production, Wendell Franklin in direction and Quincy Jones in music. On the screen, Black actors were portraying more and more complex roles.

In accordance with the changing political climate, the late sixties produced a series of bolder films dealing with stressing political issues. Poet LeRoi Jones's (Imamu Amiri Baraka), *Dutchman* and Melvin Van Peebles's (1968) attracted international attention because of their lucid vision of America in an era of social change.

By the 70's Television's grip on the documentation of urban street fighting caused by social discontent, brought about the creation of the Black Exploitation Movie, *Shaft* (1970) and other similar films often vulgarised and stereotyped the problem of urban Blacks. Perhaps as direct result of the inaccuracies in these depictions, the most important wave of Black cineastes called The New Black Cinema. At the forefront of this movement where for the first time Black women filmmakers; Haile Gerima, Larry Clark and Charles Burnett. The uniqueness of those filmmakers were the use of the documentary style coupled with a narra-



tive use of African rooted oral tradition. On the stylistic level, the films produced had more linked to the diversity of the Afro-American culture. The narrative of these works represented a sudden shift toward the non-Western film form.

Almost without notice contemporary Black filmmakers have gone further towards the decolonization of a more blatantly colonized medium.

AFRICA

by Gigi Prince

The mere mention of "Africa" evokes images of Tarzan, jungles, and starvation. These myths have existed for so long it is difficult to convince the Western World they are false. Fortunately, writers have emerged from countries across Africa to educate those misled by ethnocentric literature.

Chinua Achebe is a Nigerian author who has earned respect and recognition not only in West Africa but in the Western World. His themes are real to every colonized nation of Africa. His country, like many others, was left in ruins after gaining its independence from Europe.

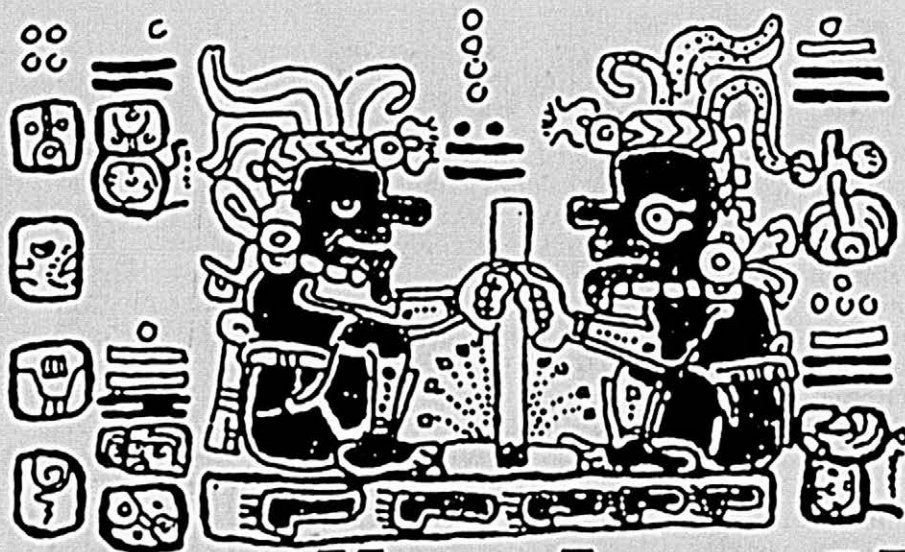
Achebe made it his duty to explore issues in post-colonial Nigeria, dispel myths and to redefine a Nigerian identity. In *No Longer At Ease*, he writes of the dilemma facing a young Nigerian educated by the British, when he returns to his native environment. The main character is caught between two cultures, and must deal with the contradiction as he is pressured by his people to contribute to their community.

Achebe is able to portray the Nigerian traditionally and show the

reader a logic, structure, and organized system presumed non-existent by the Western World. From the misconceptions perpetuated in North America and Europe, one would expect that the West brought civilisation and social refinement to the Peoples of Africa. In fact the Western intrusion in Africa led to the political corruption of many nations of this once wealthy land. Achebe often goes back to pre-colonial Nigeria so that he can remember his rich, uncontaminated culture. Readers undoubtedly see truth in his writings as he speaks of his natal environment.

Colonial tales of travels in Africa are always ethnocentric. To justify colonialism and imperialism, they speak of their so-called duty to civilise the 'barbaric' people, while raping their land of its natural wealth and the people of their pride and glory. So, a once free and self-determined continent is divided and ruled by industrialized nations.

Any native African will laugh and explain the lunacy of the forced myths still believed in Western cultures. Achebe puts a truthful examination of African peoples, forcing us to reflect on these myths and the indecencies they were created to justify.



Amandla Awethu

Nineteen hundred and ninety. Brother Malcolm X would have been 65 and Dr. King 51 years of age. Both men were murdered before their goals could be realized. Nelson Mandela enters his 27th year in jail while the age-old promise of his release is emptily repeated. The murders of Michael Wade Lawson, Anthony Griffin and the paralysis of Sophia Cook by members of the police force, echo the reality that the conditions fought against in the fifties and sixties still exist. Racism is alive and thriving in the country where Brian Mulroney recently declared racism is not a "burning issue".

Racist attitudes permeate all aspects of daily life and paralyze our youth. Young people are indoctrinated by a racist educational system which does not reflect nor validate their experience as Black people. We are streamed away from sciences and university to trade schools and possibly college. We are turned away from jobs that we are qualified for, and treated with different standards by those in positions of power, for one reason. This reason incriminates us before we are even born — but the cycle must change.

A minority cannot oppress a majority indefinitely. The divide and conquer tactic is used by Europeans to weaken us but members of the majority, especially we Africans in exile, know this and understand the need for the call of UMOJA and KUJICHAGULIA. These are the words our East African brothers and sisters respectively call unity and self-determination in Kiswahili. This society will not change simply on a basis of morality. We have to fight for what is rightfully ours, the freedom to control our own destiny in a society that treats us not according to

our conscious behavior but according to the colour of our skin.

We, as African peoples, need to re-establish our ties with the Motherland. The cloaks of inferiority and backwardness cast upon us by this Eurocentric society must be shed. Now is the time to return to our past levels of advancement. Now is the time to reaffirm our beauty. Now is the time to celebrate OUR-story. Now is the time to celebrate ourselves.

February, ironically the shortest month of the year, is for the celebration of African history and culture. We should all take these twenty-eight days to learn the stifled history of a people responsible for providing the basis of mathematics, philosophy and the invention of many devices we take for granted such as the traffic light and the comb.

We must surround ourselves with symbols of pride and accomplishment as white folks do for themselves. The media parades constant images of European beauty and accomplishment. We as oppressed people must do the same for ourselves as a start in lifting our oppression. Black history must not be confined to the month of February but instead celebrated on every day of every month to make the struggle that much easier. As Brother Malcolm X says "there will ultimately be a clash between the oppressed and those who do the oppressing. There will be a clash between those who want freedom, justice and equality for everyone and those who want to continue the system of exploitation." Which side are you on? AMANDLA AWETHU! THE POWER IS OURS!

Anne-Marie Clarke

...A history of Black contributions

continued from page 5

central American coast complete with longitude and latitude.

Comparing culture of Africa and America, one can find striking similarities in the usage of pipes, decorative beads, spears, plants, mummies, pyramids, musical instruments etc — all testimony to the exchange between the two continents.

The Mayas, Aztecs and Olmec people recorded the visit of the Africans on stone and clay sculptures. Some of their gods like Nahuatl had unmistakable negroid features. Griots in Mali sing the glories of prince Abubakari the Second "the navigator."

The Portuguese reported encountering descendants of shipwrecked Africans around the region of what is now Ecuador. But by and large, Black passage in the Americas was left unexplained by White explorers.

University students owe heartfelt gratitude to the Malian king Mansa Mousa who built the first university in Timbuktu in the thirteenth century. The university was a meeting place for the Arab and African intellect to discuss theology, astronomy and the sphericity of the earth.

Recent Contributions

Louis Latimer improved the lamp Thomas Edison created, invented the light bulb, and designed the telephone.

Granville T. Woods invented the gas mask which saved thousands of lives during World War II. He also came up with the electric stop signals

as traffic signs.

Joseph Blair tried to sell his patent for two-staged rockets to the US government in 1928; they turned him down. Thirty years later, he was invited to Washington to explain why the newly designed rockets couldn't get off the ground. Blair also obtained patents for washing machines and mouse-traps.

In the field of chemistry, George Washington Carver was the greatest agricultural chemist. He created the chemistry of industrial use of organic materials.

Names of Blacks such as Alexander Pushkin, Alexander Dumas, W.E.B. Dubois, Richard Wright, James Baldwin and Chinua Achebe have made history in literature around the world.

African rhythms permeate most of modern and contemporary music. In classical music African descendants of mixt heritage such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Haydn have left their mark. Jazz has emerged as the original American art form and has become the modern classical music.

In the medical field, Dr. Daniel H. Williams performed the first successful open heart surgery. Charles Drew is the founder of the Blood Bank.

Illustrious McGill alumni

Richard Drew worked part-time during his studies of medicine at McGill University and nevertheless managed to graduate second in his class and win first prize in anatomical sciences as well as receiving various excellence scholarships. Upon graduation Dr. Drew went to teach at Howard University in Washington, D.C. and pursued research on the properties of blood plasma and its preservation at Columbia University.

In 1940 he published "Banked blood: A study in blood preservation." His discovery enabled the foundation of a blood bank and subsequently saved millions of lives during World War II and up to today. Charles Drew quit the Red Cross when the organization instated segregation of blood. Negro blood was termed insulting and unscientific.

Dr. Drew's death is also sadly ironic. In April 1950 Dr. Charles Drew was involved in a serious car accident. He was taken to the closest hospital in Burlington, North Carolina, where the staff of the White hospital refused him the urgent blood transfusion he needed because he was Black. Dr. Charles Drew was transferred to another hospital where he died.

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Malcolm X and empowerment

by Marcos Townsend

FBI number 4282299 was born May 19, 1925. By the time of his assassination on Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm X had laid the foundation for the progress of Afro-Americans.

Malcolm X, born Malcolm Little, expected to be murdered. He told author Alex Haley so two months before his death. The regal bearing of Malcolm X's six-foot-four frame, coupled with his knowledge, made him an imposing figure. The popular media labelled him a violent radical. He knew white America could not accept his philosophy of self-reliance and self-defense for the Afro-American. His purpose was to raise Afro-Americans to a level set by Blacks — not whites.

For 12 years Malcolm X was the Minister of the New York Mosque of the Nation of Islam, a sect of Afro-American Muslims founded by the Honourable Elijah Muhammad in the early 1930s. The NOI advocate a return to Africa or the establishment of a "black state" within the United States. They say Afro-Americans can never reach their full potential in a white society.

Malcolm X split with the Nation of Islam in March 1964.

During a pilgrimage to Mecca on April 13, 1964, Malcolm saw black and white Muslims living together peacefully. Upon returning to the U.S. at the end of May he formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity.

The group wanted to clarify the distorted history of American Blacks, to improve the quality of education, to end the economic exploitation of Afro-Americans through

self-empowerment. He promoted, not violence, but self-defense for Afro-Americans to defend themselves "by any means necessary."

In his characteristically composed, articulate style he explained:

Any (Afro-American) leader who teaches our people to be non-violent in the face of violence is actually doing our people a disservice... (When) the government will not protect us or defend us or find those who have brutalized us and made us the victims for the past 400 years then it is time for us to do whatever is necessary to defend ourselves, and it should be emphasized that by this I don't mean that we should go out and look for trouble, or start trouble or initiate, acts of aggression.

Malcolm X was frequently accused of hating whites. Although he welcomed solidarity with whites after his trip to Mecca, he refused to thank whites for compassion. He compared being overly appreciative of whites to thanking somebody for pulling a knife out of your back after being stabbed. He remained opposed to whites joining the OAAU.

"The (Afro-Americans) aren't the racists. Where the really sincere whites have got to do their proving of themselves is not among the black victims but on the battle lines of where racism really is — and that's in their own home communities," he said.

Even the best white members, Malcolm X said, would impede Afro-Americans' discovery they can do for themselves.

by Audrea J. Golding

News reports, magazine covers and alarming statistics convey the message loud and clear. Our race is in crisis! Statistics show that African-American people are subject to the highest rates of drug abuse and related deaths, teenage pregnancy, poverty and homelessness, as well as illiteracy, welfare dependency and single parent households.

It has become evident that the North American educational system is a main cause of these problems. Low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority among African-Americans have been directly linked to their miseducation.

Our educational system is no freer from racism than any other North American institution. North American educational systems are built around a Eurocentric bias, perpetuating a European perspective of history and culture and simultaneously perpetuating negative stereotypes and myths of African history and Africans of the diaspora.

The educational system in North America deliberately diminishes and conceals the great contributions of Africans to human development. 'Black education' in American schools is based on the African-American and Caribbean experience, focussing on Africans as slaves

and displaced people. Our history does not commence in the period of slavery. Our history is the beginning of human kind.

As a result, African-Americans have been alienated from their rich and illustrious past.

North American schools have long recognized the value of the pyramids of Egypt to mathematics. Yet, they hesitate to reveal the color of those who built them. Our schools teach that Western science and art originated in Ancient Greece. In fact, the Greeks learnt these subjects from the Egyptians. Herodotus, the 'father of history', left for Egypt in 457 B.C. to be educated in history. Hippocrates, the father of medicine according to European and American schools, took oath to Imhotep, a great African who lived more than 2000 years before the birth of Hippocrates.

According to Dr. Molefi Asante, the curriculum passed off as African History in the current school system contributes to the self-doubt developed in African-American children. Asante, head of the Black Studies Department at Temple University, says a new curriculum must be developed for schools to remove the racist and biased education which feeds the minds of youth.

Educators in Canada and the United States have committed themselves to pioneering a new,

Afrocentric school curriculum. This curriculum will focus on the history, culture, politics, and social contributions of Africans in the Motherland and of the diaspora. As an alternative to the prevalent and stagnant American educational system, it will seek to dispel any stereotypes or perceived shame of African history and to reaffirm that history in the minds of young African-Americans.

Books and teachers will not use the negative terminology usually used to refer to the African race. 'Tribe' is not the word to refer to a zulu-speaking population in Africa. French-Québecers are defined as a linguistic or nationalist group — never as a tribe.

A departure from North America's eurocentric educational system is long overdue. It is a key to the re-unification of people of African descent. The Afrocentric model will help Africans identify ourselves as a single force around the world, not as a people divided by the various barriers imposed on us by colonialism and slavery.

Thanks to the pioneers of the Afrocentric educational model, African youths from here on end will be an integral part of the struggle to free an oppressed mind and reverse the tragic effects which this oppression has caused in the African-American community.

Writer James Baldwin confronted hang-ups

by Christine Archer

There is a crisis in America. The crisis of the Black artist in America. Like so many Black American artists — Count Basie, Richard Wright and Josephine Baker — author and playwright James Baldwin was more honoured and respected abroad than he was in his own society. America saw only a "homosexual Harlem boy."

Yet nothing undermined the eloquence and passion that was Baldwin's style, nor repressed his rage — the rage present in every Black American. There was a beauty in this man whom many found unattractive. The intensity of his eyes in the autobiographical film *The Price of the Ticket* was striking. His voice: lulling, breathy. His language: sing-song, eloquent and simplistic. He was never without a cigarette or drink. He spoke with great excitement and urgency; the constant movement of body and hands was a language in itself.

Baldwin was not a prophet, but rather a witness to the hy-

pocrisy that defined the American way of life. In *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, he speaks of religion and of a God he cannot, as a Black American, relate to. In *Another Country*, he confronts Americans with their own terror of interracial relationships. As Baldwin confronts his own homosexuality in *Giovanni's Room*, he tackles America's deep-rooted homophobia. He dared America to re-evaluate its fear and loathing. He told white America what Black Americans want to say and what white Americans refuse to hear.

He made Blacks confront their internalized shame and self-hatred. Baldwin told the Black people, we must collect the fragments and pieces divided within us.

Yet Baldwin could never escape America's racism, even through his 30 year self-imposed exile in France. France had given him its highest award, the Legion d'Honneur. America had only driven him away with its hostility. Let us pay tribute to the memory of James Baldwin, the author and the man.



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10 • the McGill Daily Black Heritage Supplement

Thursday, February 1, 1990

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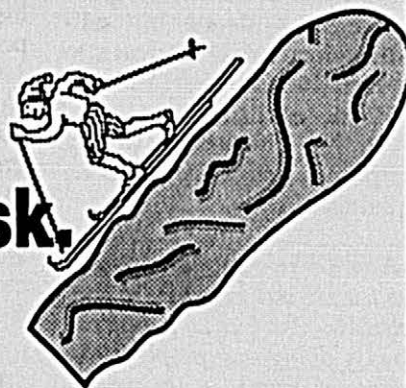
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Turan Transport (ex-Student Movers) Moving; Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver. Storage; weekly, monthly student rates. Local big or small moves. BBB. VISA, 747-2222 or 739-8242.

350 - JOBS

Bartenders - Get yourself a very lucrative part-time job. The Master School of Bartending offers training courses and placement service. 2021 Peel Street (Peel Metro). 849-2828. (Student Discounts).

Paint the town this summer with Triple A Student Painters®: Painters and forepersons needed for West Island District. Sure beats Treeplanting! Call Anthony at 694-7028.

Creative lighting designer/technician needed for entertainment work through the spring and summer. Late night hours. Please call Richard at 345-0509.

Bilingual Receptionist needed to work part-time. \$5.50/hr. Côte St. Luc Area. Transportation can be arranged. Call Flamingos Party 483-5947.

352 - HELP WANTED

Wanted: Person to transcribe taped lectures. Will pay \$15.00 per hour tape transcribed. 2 to 4 hours per week. 483-4966 (481-2001, messages).

Coast Range (Treeplanting) To those who left their names at Student Manpower, please call Jon 931-8553 for interview. Still looking for

other planters as well.

354 - TYPING SERVICES

Success to all students in 1990. Theses, Term papers, Resumes, Translations, Editing, 20 years of experience. 7 days a week \$1.50 double spaced. IBM. On McGill campus, Peel St., CALL Paulette Vigneault 288-9638.

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Girl Friday Word Processing. Resumes, term papers, correspondence, mailing lists (laser printer). 9:00-5:30 (7 days) 937-8495.

Word Perfect, typing, translation. High quality work on term papers, manuscripts, theses, C.V., reports of all kind. Francine 593-9851.

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LASER-TYPE. Theses, papers, resumes, etc. Translation, editing, laser printing. Student Discount. Prestige (on Guy - Yellow Pages under C.V. or Resume) 939-2200.

358 SERVICES OFFERED

Anger Resolution Workshop: Learn new productive ways of handling anger in your life. Develop problem-solving techniques to resolve your anger. Info: McGill Counselling, 398-3601.

Essay help offered by English Ph. D. English Social Sciences, Humanities. Editing/Research/ Writing Assistance. 933-8652.

Willing females & males needed for student haircuts. Supervised by professionals. Tuesdays at 5 p.m. For cuts \$10. Estetica 2175 Crescent. For appointments 849-9231.

361 ARTICLES FOR SALE

Round trip Montreal to Vancouver, female,

February 15 - 25, \$450. Tory at 288-9553.

One way plane ticket (male) Montreal-Vancouver Leaving Feb. 1 \$150.00 will accept best offer. Call 697-3609.

Moving Sale: Everything must go! Disk, dresser, washer, leather chairs and more. Call 845-1613.

363 TO GIVE AWAY

Free! Beautiful apartment cat that will fit any room decor. Very friendly and very easy care for. Call for home delivery: 286-1577.

372 LOST AND FOUND

Help! Lost: a gold ring with Chinese writing (characters) engraved on it; of extreme sentimental value. Please call 939-5767.

Found In Brontëman 1 - Blue Scarf, left on Tuesday Morning early January. 939-1328.

374 - PERSONALS

Frosty says...

"But bubble baths are definitely necessary."



GERT's: 10:30 p.m. You're tired but your friends want to stay. Don't want to walk home alone? Use the WALK-SAFE NETWORK!! McIL Lobby Mon - Thurs 10:45 p.m.

Roses are red, violets are blue, we're awake at 2:47 a.m. and so are you. Call McGill Nightline until 3 a.m. nightly, to talk about life in general or our horrible poetry - 398-6246.

What is Trusting in God? McGill Christian, along with Pastor Ken Bombay, explore this topic on Friday, February 2nd., 19h30 Presbyterian College's Chapel.

Engineering blood bash is being held on Friday (Feb. 2) Happy Hour 8:30 - 9:30.

Chance of winning \$200. Decision making study - one hour long. McGill Psychology Department. Wendy 482-9728.

Rock n Roll Picnic II. Me, Mom + Morgentaler with the Rippcordz & the Elementals. Friday, February 9, Ballroom 8 p.m. \$5.50/\$4.50 with McGill ID.

Now, you probably want to go to a warm, sunny, tropical paradise island for Spring Break.

Wouldn't that be nice? You can't afford it?

Get a job! Call Fortune Graphics. Tel: 289-8526.

Burning Down the House!!! 2nd annual party at Beta Theta Pi, Friday, February 2nd. 3647 University. 2 for 1, two for one.

383 LESSONS OFFERED

LSAT/GMAT - We offer weekend preparation courses for LSAT's and GMAT's. Course fees start at \$180. For information and a free brochure, call 1-800-387-5519.

Offering Russian Lessons - as well as Russian-English Translation Services - lessons given by Native Speakers - ask for Irena or Lena 486-6108.

385 NOTICES

Gays and Lesbians of McGill offers an information and counselling talkline. Call us with questions, problems, or just to talk. Phone 398-6822 or drop by Union 417, M-F, 7 - 10 p.m.

Lesbian/Gay studies group meets Thursdays, discussion group meets Fridays, both at Yellow Door (3625 Aylmer) 17h00. Info 597-0363 (Bill).

Animals are suffering confinement and death in the hands of us humans. Help work to improve their fate. META 276-0914.

The Arts & Science Undergraduate Society cordially invites all grads to the Red & White Ball, Friday March 23 at le Centre Sheraton. Tickets on sale now at Sadie's until March 16. \$38 per person. Table Reservations on a first come first served basis.

Call for Papers!! McGill Journal of Political Economy is accepting all papers of an economic facet for Spring publication. Submit to ESA box, Economics Department.

OPENING TONIGHT! Come see the premiere performance of Pirates of Penzance at Westmount High. 5 minutes from Atwater Metro. Tickets \$5.00 students, \$10.00 adults. Feb. 1 - 3 and 8 - 10 at 8 p.m., Feb. 4 at 5:00 p.m. 398-6820.

Another Spectacular Tropical Bash! Reggae, calypso, house, caribbean food. Friday Feb. 2, Union B09/B10, 9 p.m. Admission \$4 - All are welcome. Info: Andrew - 848-9382.

Caribbean Students' Society Office Hours: Mon/Thurs 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Union 408, 398-6814. Caribbean Newspapers - \$1.75. Cultural Show - March 10, Tickets \$6. Info: Andrew 848-9382.

Union Ballroom, Saturday Feb. 3rd, 8:00 p.m. Gert's Ski Club Party, all students welcome. 4 for 5 refreshments all night, plus first run ski movies, D.J. Dorr Prizes, etc.

Norwegian Knitting Raffle: Mittens & head bands. Tickets on sale in Union Lobby in 1st week of February. Draw will be Feb. 7 at 5:00 p.m.

Amnesty International would like to thank a those who made our benefit at the Alley such a great success. We meet Tuesdays at 7:00, Union 425.

387 VOLUNTEERS

Are you Adventurous? Psychologist studying carefree people who've led exciting, impulsive lives. If you're the type of person who would do anything for a dare, call 398-6109.

Had a religious, mystical or otherwise extraordinary experience? We want to hear about it. Leave number or address: Religious Experience Research Project, 3520 University, Montreal, Quebec.

EDELMAN

The Beatty Memorial Lectures Committee at McGill University Presents:
Dr. Gerald Edelman

Nobel Laureate and Director of the Neurosciences Institute, Rockefeller University, who will give a series of lectures on the theme of:

MORPHOLOGY & Mind

F E B R U A R Y 5 , 6 & 7 , 1 9 9 0

Topobiology:
The Problem of Morphology

Monday
February 5, 1990
Fieldhouse Auditorium
Leacock Building
Room 132
6:30 p.m.

Neural Darwinism:
The Problem of Perception

Tuesday
February 6, 1990
Stewart Biology Building
Room S1-4
6:30 p.m.

The Remembered Present: Problems of Consciousness

Wednesday
February 7, 1990
Fieldhouse Auditorium
Leacock Building
Room 132
6:30 p.m.

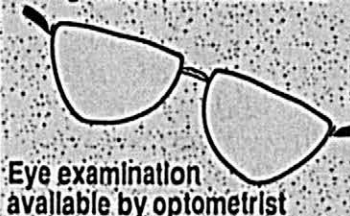
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Tapeheads does for rock videos what *This is Spinal Tap* did for rock 'n' roll."

— Brendan Kelly, *The Gazette*

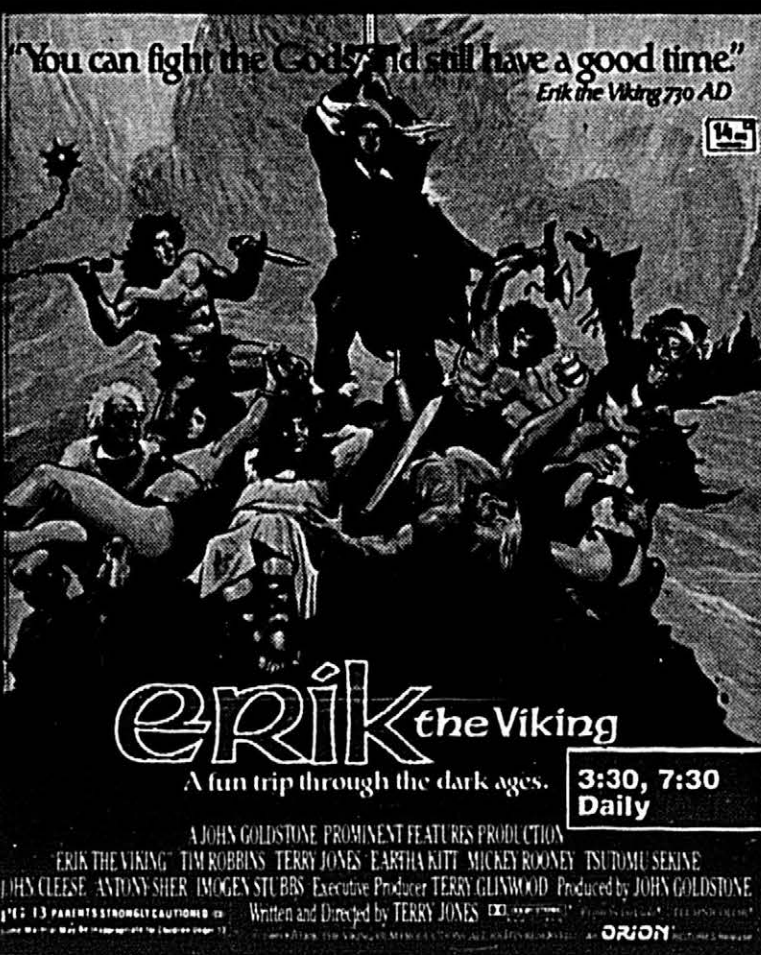
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